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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SANTO DOMINGO 000898

SENSITIVE  
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STATE FOR WHA/CAR WSMITH, GSCHADRACK

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/17/2014

TAGS: PGOV PREL DR

SUBJECT: MINIMAL CHANGES TO DOMINICAN LEADERSHIP - SO FAR

REF: A. SDO 817  
1B. SDO 570  
1C. SDO 865

Classified By: Charge R Bulllen for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

11. (U) As is the tradition, the President of the Dominican Republic announced changes in his cabinet and among his advisors on August 16. There have so far been no sweeping or radical changes, but the following are noteworthy:

-- Celso Marranzini replaces Radhames Segura as Executive Vice-President of the Dominican Energy Corporation (CDEEE).

Segura had been heavily criticized in the press, and elsewhere, for many of the country's electricity woes, as well as corruption (reftel A). Marranzini, who is from the private sector, has been one of the most vocal critics of energy policy under Segura. However, Segura will become an "advisor" to the President on energy issues.

-- Vice-admiral Sigfrido Pared Perez (brother of Senate President and ruling PLD party Secretary General Reinaldo Pared Perez) will be the next Director General of Migration, in lieu of Major-general Jose Anibal Sanz Jimimian, who has not yet been given a new assignment. Emboffs have worked well with Pared Perez in the past.

-- Rafael Evans, who appears to be a U.S. legal permanent resident (LPR), was named to become the Dominican Republic's new Consul General (CG) in New York.

-- Frank Rodriguez replaces Hector Rodriguez Pimentel as Director of the National Institute of Water Resources (INDRHI), which institution has also been heavily criticized for mismanagement and corruption (reftel A). Rodriguez goes to the Dominican Agricultural Institute (IAD).

-- Counter-narcotics "czar" Marino Vinicio ("Vincho") Castillo will also become head of the National Commission for Ethics and Anti-Corruption. In so doing, Vincho replaces Jose Joaquin Bido Medina, who will become presidential "advisor" for "transparency policy."

-- Aristides Fernandez Zucco is replacing Andres Vanderhorst as Director of the Airport Authority (reftel B). Vanderhorst will, however, be a secretary of state without portfolio.

-- Enriquez Martinez takes over from Jose Francisco Pena Guaba as head of the National Lottery, an institution that has also had corruption issues. Meanwhile, Pena Guaba goes to the Dominican Port Authority.

-- Juan Francisco Matos Cantano will substitute for Enrique Martinez as chief of the State Sugar Company (CEA). While sugar has historically been very important for the Dominican economy, the CEA has not refined sugar in some 10 years and controls land with "bateyes" in some of the poorest conditions of the country (reftel C).

12. (SBU) Post has also learned that the head of Naval Intelligence will also be replaced. Vice-admiral Ramon Betances will take over that agency, replacing Vice-admiral Edwin Dominici, who has yet to be assigned a new post.

¶13. (SBU) Comment: The immediate reaction of some Dominican contacts (and website commentaries) has been lukewarm. Some think that additional, and more important, changes will follow. Observers note that while a few people with poor reputations have been replaced (e.g. Vanderhorst), several of these have retained some sort of position, such as becoming yet another of President Fernandez's many advisors.

¶14. (C) Comment (cont'd.): So far, Post's concerns about the selection of new heads of the armed forces or the national police have not materialized. The importance of the appointment of Marranzini may depend on whether will have the authority to make significant changes in the GODR's energy policy and operations.

¶15. (SBU) Comment (cont'd.): The nomination of Evans (a member of the ruling PLD party's Central Committee) to be CG in New York does, however, underscore the problem the U.S. has had with the assignment, by the GODR, of LPRs or Amcits to work in consulates in the United States. This is a matter we have previously raised with the GODR and Post is aware that Washington is moving forward with a diplomatic note for the DR Embassy on such consular issues. Evans also has the downside of having once served as a non-accredited "vice consul," in apparent contravention of U.S. laws and State Department rules.

¶16. (C) Comment (cont'd.): Finally, the appointment of Vincho as head of the National Ethics Commission, while he retains his anti-narcotics chief position, is intriguing: It suggests the GODR is making an implicit the link between

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corruption and narco-trafficking. End Comment.  
BULLEN